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The problem of poor academic performance among certain categories of children was presented. There was a direct correlation between socioeconomic position and academic achievement. One cause of lower levels of academic achievement among poor youth was the fact that they received less instructional time. They had higher absence rates due to poor health care; more of the teacher's time was taken up in discipline. A second cause was the strong tendency in our society to motivate academic achievement by holding the promise of future occupational rewards. Discrepancies between educational performance and occupational rewards were perceived by low-income and minority groups. If the school failed to practice equality, it could be understood as contributing to the problem. The limited problem of differences in attitudes toward education by social class was examined also.

The sample participants were predominantly from tenements and low-income public housing. The respondents were questioned about attitudes and actions, among which were occupation, number of school years completed, and total family income.

Results showed that members of all classes perceived the connection between education and social mobility. Middle-class parents, with a more secure economic position, were less concerned about providing adequate education for their children, took such education for granted, and were less likely to report it when thinking about a good life for their children. Lower-class parents, on the other hand, perceived education as beyond their financial capacity and reacted by de-emphasizing education when thinking about a good life for their children. For the working class parents, an adequate education was neither assured nor beyond the realm of possibility. Middle-class parents tended to perceive education as an end in itself. In comparisons of class conceptions of a good life for children, therefore, education would be more salient for working class parents.

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SOCIAL CLASS: EDUCATIONAL ATTITUDES AND PARTICIPATION

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SOCIAL CLASS: EDUCATIONAL ATTITUDES AND PARTICIPATION

What we do about a persisting social problem, such as poor academic achievement, depends in large part on our assumptions about the forces that produce it. Every approach to this problem is based on certain assumptions, explicit or implicit, about why the problem it is seeking to solve exists in the first place. In this paper, we shall set forth some ideas which we hope are helpful in dealing with the problem of poor academic performance among certain categories of children.

The problem we have been asked to focus upon is that of the generally direct correlation between socioecomonic position and academic achievement. There are, of course, important qualifications which should be noted when this correlation is discussed. Although the correlation holds generally when the various strata of our society as a whole are compared, it may not necessarily hold for certain important subgroupings; some ethnic groups may tend to perform well despite their low socioeconomic position; some groups may tend to perform poorly despite very high socioecomonic position. The point is not that the correlation is unvarying whatever the specialized status categories which one compares, but rather that it tends to hold for very large aggregates of the population despite these internal variations.

If we ask whether this general correlation can partly be explained by class differences in emphasis on education, the answer is probably yes. However, the problem of underachievement in low-income groups cannot be explained simply by differences in emphasis on education, although the representatives of educational institutions may find it convenient to do so. It must also be recognized that other forces combine to produce lower levels of achievement in low-income groups, several of which might be noted.

One force making for lower levels of academic achievement among poor youth is the fact that they receive less instructional time. A number of factors combine to diminish instructional time, not the least of which is teacher turnover. For a variety of reasons, many teachers are reluctant to teach in the slum school. A study of the career patterns of Chicago public-school teachers documents the fact that teachers normally begin their careers in lower-class neighborhoods, where there are more vacancies, and transfer out as soon as they can.[2] In addition to high turnover, this also means that teachers in slum schools are generally less experienced. The effect of this situation is especially unfortunate when one considers the characteristic instability of many slum communities, not to mention the economic uncertainties of slum youngsters' lives and the frequent changes in the composition of their family. It is important that the school, as represented by its teachers, be a constant, stable, omnipresent force in the community.

Because of the greater turnover of teachers in slum schools, their relative inexperience, and the geographic mobility of low-income families, slum youth receive less actual instructional time than do school children in middle-class neighborhoods. Indeed, one study of a deprived area school indicates that as much as 80 percent of the school day was devoted to discipline or organizational detail; even with the best teachers this figure never fell below 50 percent.[3]

A second force making for underachievement stems from the strong tendency in our society to motivate academic achievement by holding out the promise of

future occupational rewards. It should be pointed out, however, that educational attainment does not necessarily enable the lower-class person to overcome the disadvantages of his low social origins.

> Thus workers' sons with "some college" education are about as well off(financially) as a group as the sons of non-manual fathers who have graduated from high school but not attended college. Similarly, high school graduation for the sons of workers results in their being slightly better off than the sons of non-manual workers who have not completed high school. [4]

To the extent that one's social origins, despite education, still constitute a restraining influence on upward movement, we may assume that other objective consequences of social position intervene, such as the ability of one's family to give one a start in a business or profession by supplying funds or influential contacts.

The influence of social class as a deterrent to social mobility, despite the possession of education, becomes all the more important when coupled with influences stemming from race and nationality. It hardly needs to be said that race usually acts as a major barrier to occupational mobility no matter what the educational achievement of the person involved. This situation is easing, to be sure, as progress in fair employment practices for all racial groups is slowly achieved. Nevertheless, it would be grossly inaccurate to say that a Negro youth in our society has the same chance as a white youth to become upwardly mobile given an equivalent level of education. It is not in the least uncommon to find Negro youth with college training forced to take employment in semi-skilled and lower white collar positions. Among the professions, only teaching and social work have been readily available to them.

The point is, of course, that the major inducement to educational achievement in our society is the promise of future occupational rewards. If, however, it is known in advance that these rewards will be largely withheld from certain socioeconomic and racial groups, then it is unlikely that high levels of educational achievement can be sustained in such groups. Thus, academic performance may be devalued because the young in such groups see no relationship between it and the realities of their future.

What we have been saying about the relationship between educational performance and occupational rewards assumes, of course, that discrepancies between the two tend to be perceived by low-income and minority groups in our society. Generally speaking, the evidence available does suggest that perceptions of opportunity do accord with the reality. In this connection, Hyman summarizes data which show that there are distinct differentials by socioeconomic status in judgments regarding the accessibility of occupational rewards. Thus, 63 percent of one sample of persons in professional and managerial positions felt that the "years ahead held good chances for advancement" while only 48 percent of a sample of factory workers gave this response. Furthermore, the factory workers were more likely to think that "getting along well with the boss" or being a "friend or relative of the boss" were important determinents of mobility; professional and executive personnel were more likely to stress "quality of work" and "energy and willingness." [5] Such findings suggest that low-income persons do indeed perceive the impact of social origins upon their life changes. If these are the perceptions of occupational mobility held by parents in such groups, it is hardly

likely that children in such families would hold contrary views on a wide scale. Under such circumstances, the perception of the role of education as a channel of mobility may fail to assume the importance which we might otherwise wish.

Third, it should be noted that the distinctive socialization of the slum youth poses a barrier to academic achievement if the school is organized essentially in terms of middle-class values, as is typically the case. In the development of curricula and the structuring of teacher roles, this culture conflict (as distinct from the time-worn emphasis on cultural deprivation) has never been fully recognized - a fact that puts the lower-class child at a distinct disadvantage in competition with the middle-class child.

The problem of differential socialization vis-a-vis educational achievement can best be seen by looking at certain ethnic and nationality values. By and large, immigrant groups historically have entered our social structure at the bottom, and thus it is in the lower class that these values have had the greatest impact. In many of the groups which have come to this country, distinctive systems of values were already well established and thus tended to persist here for a number of generations. Although the more superficial aspects of the American middle-class value system may have been acquired rapidly, the more subtle and deeply embedded aspects of the Old World values were abandoned less readily. Indeed, there is good reason to think that many of these values continue to exert a profound influence upon the behavior of many persons in the second and third generations.

The point to be made about these persisting value orientations is that they do not always facilitate success in the school. Our system of education places a strong stress upon doing rather than being, upon a future orientation rather than an orientation toward the present or the past, upon the notion that man is superordinate to nature rather in harmony with it or subjugated by it, upon the notion that man is flexible and plastic and capable of change rather than that he is essentially, and perhaps immutably, evil. A child who has not acquired these particular value orientations in his home and community is not so likely to compete successfully with youngsters among whom these values are implicitly taken for granted.[6] Part of the problem of underachievement among some lower-class persons may therefore be attributed to the existence of these alternative value orientations to which the young are differentially socialized.

The failure of the school to take these differing value patterns into account constitutes a striking form of inequality. In this connection, there are at least three respects in which equality can be understood. First, whatever the socioecomomic position of the child. Second, equality means that individual differences in learning patterns shall be taken into account. Finally, equality means that the educational system shall not be organized in such a way as to favor children who are socialized in one rather than another part of the social structure. Differentials in socialization, arising from socioeconomic position and ethnic orgins, must, like individual differences in learning, also be adjusted to by the school system. If the educational enterprise is simply an extension of the middle-class home, then it follows that only middle-class children will tend to do well in it. If the school fails to practice equality in these several respects, then it can be understood as contributing to the very problem which it otherwise deplores.

Keeping such factors as these in mind, we propose to examine the limited problem of differences in attitudes toward education by social class. In addition, we shall ask whether involvement in educational activities - such as visiting the school or participating in parent-teacher associations - appreciably influences these attitudes and, if so, in which socioeconomic strata.

Data and Indices

The data upon which this paper is based were gathered in the course of a survey of attitudes of adult residents living in the Lower East Side of Manhattan. For generations the Lower East Side has been labelled a slum. Traditionally, it has been the first residential area for immigrants to this country. At present, about half of the 100,000 residents of the community were born outside of the United States. Ethnic groups in the area include Italians, Jews, Negroes, East Europeans, Chinese, and a large segment of Puerto Ricans. The last represent the most recent wave of immigrants to the city. Except for a smattering of middle-income cooperatives, about half of the population lives in tenements, and the other half in low-income public housing.

The Survey Sample

A sample of residents was drawn by listing every known dwelling unit in the area, stratifying this list into 250 equal intervals of 133 housing units, and randomly selecting five households within each interval. Since the listing of households corresponded to the geographical arrangement of housing units, the sample is a proportionate random sample, geographically stratified.[7] One thousand two hundred and fifty households were selected in this way. Within each of these households, an effort was made to interview one person twenty years or older. The person to be interviewed was also randomly selected.

Interviews were actually conducted with 988 of the 1,250 potential respondents, for a completion rate of 79%. About half of the persons with whom interviews were not conducted refused to be interviewed. Preliminary probes of the data, and comparisons with census materials indicate that the obtained 988 interviews can be taken reasonably representative of the community under study. Interview losses were greatest among the older residents of the community, and in households with no adolsecent members. Completion rates were quite high among Puerto Ricans and residents of low-income public housing. Interviews were conducted entirely or partly in thirteen languages,[8] thus reducing any bias in the sample towards those residents who were more culturally assimilated.

The Measure of Social Class

Since the topic of this paper deals with the impact of involvement in educational matters upon attitudes towards education by social class, let us turn now to a brief discussion of the indices of social class and of involvement in education which will be used.

The notion of social class generally refers to an individual's general standing in a hierarchy of positions. Since we can always locate some individuals whose general standing in the society is higher or lower than others, every society is stratified into social classes. Social class seems to have

two dimensions: a productive dimension and a consumptive dimension. The former involves the degree to which an individual possesses wealth, knowledge, and power. It is most commonly represented by an individual's income, education, and occupation. The consumptive dimension of social class involves expressions of a particular style of life, and is measured by how a person spends his money, where his children are educated, and what values he espouses.[9] The index of social class which is employed in this study is a measure of a person's general position with respect to the productive aspects of class. It is, therefore, a measure of a person's general educational, occupational, and ecomonic position.

In the course of the survey interview, the respondent was asked his occupation, how many years of school he had completed, and the total family income. Information on the education and occupation of the respondent's spouse, if any, was also obtained. The measure of social class is based upon the education and occupation of the head of the household, and the total family income, adjusted for the number of persons living on that income. The head of the household was classified into one of four occupational groupings: (1) professionals, semi-professionals,managers, and officials; (2) clerks and salesmen; (3) craftsmen, foremen, and self-employed white and blue collar workers; and (4) operatives, service workers, laborers, and permanently unemployed persons. The head of the household was also classified into one of four educational groups: (1) completed some college or more; (2) finished grade school or less. finally, the adjusted family income was classified into one of four categories: (1) less than the mimimum wage of $1.25 per hour; (2) more than the minimum wage, but less than the Lower East Side median income; (3) more than the Lower East Side median income, but less than the national median income; and (4) more than the national median income. These classifications were then combined into three groups which roughly correspond to the Lower Class, the Working Class, the the Lower Middle Class and above. On the basis of this index of social class, forty-four percent of the residents were classified as Lower Class,thirty-six persent as Working Class, and the remainding,twenty percent, as Lower Middle Class or above. The typical lower-class person in our index has had less than an eighth grade education, is employed as an unskilled or service worker, and lives in a family whose income per person is less than the minimum wage. The typical lower-class person, on the other hand, is a professional or semi-professional, has had some college education, and lives in a family whose income per person is above the national median. The working-class member falls between these two extremes. He is usually a skilled worker, clerk or salesman with at least some high school, and lives in a family whose income per person is about average for residents of the Lower East Side.

Measuring Involvement in Educational Activities

One of the most striking things about our educational system is that there are virtually no formal channels through which persons without children in the public schools can make known their feelings about educational matters. Those without children in school are restricted to participation in the educational system through budget hearings or ad hoc "citizens for better schools" committees. Thus, involvement in educational matters is virtually restricted to persons with children in the public schools. For such persons there are two ways to become involved in education. One, and the most preferred way, is through active participation in the local Parent-Teachers Association. The second is

through informal visits to the school and discussions with educational personnel. Persons involved in the first way are likely to focus upon problems of the educational system, such as obtaining funds to conduct special programs, motivating more participation by parents, and attempting to grasp thereasons for certain school procedures and problems. Parents who confine their participation to visiting the school are much more likely to focus upon the educational problems or success of their particular children. It is generally conceded that involvement in education through the Parent-Teachers Association is preferable to involvement through visiting the schools. By participating in the meetings and activities of the organization, it is felt that the parent gains a better perspective of the problems of the school, and that he finds himself in a better position to make his desires known and acted upon.

Our measure of involvement attempts to take these matters into account by: (1) being restricted to persons with children in the public schools; and (2) by weighing more heavily active participation in the Parent-Teachers Association. Persons who are past or present officers of the PTA, therefore, are considered most involved in educational matters. Slightly less involved are those who, although not officers of the Association, attend most of its meetings. Persons who are nominal members of the PTA are considered more involved than those who just visit the schools,while parents who do not even visit the school are deemed to be least involved. Excluded from the ihdex are respondents in the households where no one is attending school (61% of the sample), and respondents in the households where all of the children attend private or parochial schools (2% of the sample). The distribution of respondents according to the five categories of the involvement index is as follows:

Past or present officers of the PTA	4%
Attend most or all of the meetings of the PTA	7
Belongs to PTA but attends few meetings	15
Does not belong to PTA, but visits the school	45
No contact with the schools	29
Number of cases (with children in public schools)	(360)

As shown by the above figures, nearly half of the residents of the community who become involved ineducational matters do so at the lowest level -- visiting the school, presumably to discuss their own children's educational progress. Over one-fourth of the persons in the community to whom avenues of participation in educational matters are open fail to avail themselves of these opportunities.

Because of the small number of persons who are highly involved in education, only three divisions of the index will be used. We shall distinguish between those who have no contact with the schools, those who visit the school but do not belong to the Parent-Teachers Association, and those who are members of the PTA.

Attitudes Toward Education and Schools

In this section, we shall seek to discover whether there are significant differences by social class in attitudes toward education and toward schools as institutions. Although our findings generally confirm the results of earlier studies, it will also be shown that the relationship between social class and attitudes toward education is more complicated than previously assumed.

The Importance of Education

There is a great deal of evidence which suggests that although education is widely valued in our society, it is not equally valued among the several social classes. For example, Hyman summarized a national survey in which a sample of youths was asked: "about how much schooling do you think most young men need these days to get along well in the world?" The results are shown in Table I.

These data, like others that Hyman presents, show that a sizeable proportion of persons at each point in the social structure consider a college education desirable. Even in the lowest level of society, the proportion who emphasize the need for education is not small. But it is also true that there are strong differences from one stratum to another. In general, the proportion recommending higher education increases with each upward step in the socioeconomic hierarchy.[10]

When in our community survey, we asked the same question reported by Hymann, the results obtained showed the same general relationship between social class and attitudes toward education. The top half of Table II shows the results for all respondents in each class grouping, while the bottom half shows the results for respondents in households where children are attending school. In both instances the proportion of respondents saying that a young man needs more than a high school education (i.e. at least some college, or high school graduation plus technical training) increases as position in the class hierarchy increases. Thus, although three-fourths of the middle-class respondents stated that it was desirable for a young man to have more than a high school education, only fifty-nine percent of the working-class respondents, and forty-one percent of the lower-class respondents stated that a young man needs this much education. If just those respondents from households where children are attending school are compared (bottom half of the table), the same relationship is observed, except that the proportion of respondents saying more than a high school education is larger for each class grouping. That is, those respondents with children in the household attending school place a higher valuation on education than those in households with no children.

Table III shows the proportion of respondents in each class grouping who mentioned education when asked what "getting ahead" meant to them. Again there is a direct relationship between position in the class hierarchy and the importance placed on education. The relationship, however, is not especially strong. For all respondents, about one-fourth of the middle class and less than one-fifth of the lower and working-class respondents said that obtaining or providing a good education came to mind when talking about getting ahead. If the top and bottom parts of Table III are compared, the same relationship holds, except that working-class respondents are much more like middle-class respondents than lower-class respondents.

Results such as these have often been taken to mean that low-income people fail to understand the basic relationship between educational achievement and occupational mobility. While this may in part be true, such an interpretation may also be over-simplified. In this connection, we asked people whether or not they thought that "a good education is essential to getting ahead." At least 95 percent of all respondents in <u>all</u> social classes replied in the affirmative. It is true, of course, that questions of such a general and abstract order often

elicit rather sterotyped responses, and this may account for the uniformity or responses to this question by social class. On the other hand, there is also the possibility that other forces operate to produce class differences in the importance of education.

One possibility, of course, is that educational attitudes are influenced by the occupational levels which people define as meeting the criterion of "getting ahead." The answer to the question of how much education a person needs to get ahead in the world may be influenced considerably by the respondents definition of an appropriate occupational level. Thus low-income people may perceive the relationship between education and mobility, but nevertheless give lower estimates of the amount of education required to get ahead simply because they are oriented toward correspondingly lower positions in the social structure than their middle and upper-income counterparts.

A partial test of this possibility is available with data from the survey. Residents of the Lower East Side were asked: "Suppose some outstanding young man asked your advice on what would be one of the best occupations to aim toward. What one occupation do you think you would advise him toward?" Most of the respondents said that they would advise him to take up one of the professions or semi-professions. Many of the respondents, however, did not. They either said that they could not advise the young man, or would advise him toward a non-professional career. If differences in the occupational level toward which persons are oriented account for class differences in the amount of education deemed necessary, then there will be no differences between the classes when occupational level is controlled. The data are presented in Tables IV and V.

When members of the three classes are subdivided into those who would and those who would not advise the young man to take up a professional or semi-professional career, and the responses about how much education a young man should have are then examined (Table IV), the differences between the classes observed previously still remain. It can be seen, however, that respondents definitions of an appropriate career for a talented young man have a much greater impact among lower class persons than working or middle class persons. Among lower class respondents who would advise a young man to take up a professional or semi-professional career, half state that a young man needs more than a high school education to get along well in the world, whereas among those who would not advise a young man towards such a career, only about thirty percent feel that more than a high school education is needed. As we move up the class ladder, this difference gradually decreases, and, in fact, among middle class respondents, the definition of an appropriate career for a young man makes no difference at all. It would seem, therefore, that lower-class persons place less of an emphasis upon education for education's sake, since their estimates to the amount of education a young man needs are most affected by the level of occupational aspiration.

When occupational aspiration is controlled and the responses of the several social classes to questions regarding the meaning of "getting ahead" are compared, the results, are shown in Table V, are generally similar. The impact of the definition of an appropriate career for a talented young man is greater in the lower and working classes than in the middle class. Members of the middle class who do not feel that the profession or semi-professions are an appropriate

career for a talented young man are just as likely to mention education as a meaning of getting ahead as are those who do feel this way. One may conclude from this that middle-class persons are more likely than lower or working class persons to think of education as good in and of itself, regardless of the occupation they have in mind when advising a young person about careers.

Yet, the matter is not this simple, for adding to the complications of the picture of the relationship between class attitudes towards education are perceptions of the place of education in a person's conception of "the good life." One question we asked was "What kind of things come to mind when you think of a good life for (the children in this household)?" The results are shown in Tables VI and VII. Both of these tables - the first for boys and the second for girls - show the percentage of respondents in each class grouping who mentioned education as an aspect of a "good life" for the children in the household. Both tables fail to show that the importance placed on education increases as position in the class hierarchy increases. If anything, each shows that the working class respondents are slightly more likely to mention education than are their middle or lower class counterparts. This is especially true for respondents in households where children are attending school.

The results of Tables VI and VII, which indicate that education is slightly more salient for working class parents, are difficult to interpret. One possibility is that education is more problematic for working class parents than for either lower or middleclass parents. It has already been shown that members of all classes perceive the connection between education and social mobility. Tables VI and VII may reflect reality considerations. Middle-class parents with a more secure ecomomic position probably are less concerned about providing adequate education for their children, take such education for granted, and hence are less likely to report it when thinking of a good life for their children. Lower class parents, on the other hand, probably perceive education as a bit beyond their financial capacity, and react by de-emphasizing education when thinking of a good like for their children. For working-class parents, however, an adequate education is neither assured nor beyond the realm of possibility. This would make education more problematic for working-class parents, and heighten its saliency. Bolstering this would be the tendency of middle-class parents to perceive education as an end in and of itself, and the tendency of lower class persons to perceive it as a means toward an end. Both may operate to reduce the saliency of education as an element of parents' conception of a good life for their children. In comparisons of class conceptions of a good life for children, therefore, education would be more salient for working class parents.

The Schools as an Institution

Residents' evaluation of the local public schools undoubtedly have a profound affect on the ability of the school to mobilize public support for its programs. School authorities often complain of public apathy toward school problems and the difficulty of generating support for new ventures in education. At the same time, it has been charged that the schools are in, but not of the community - that, especially in low-income areas, school authorities are uninterested in, if not antagonistic towards, the local residents and their offspring. The school,

it is said, fails to adapt its educational techniques and routines to the values and learning habits of the population it serves. This, in turn, is supposed to create a barrier between the school and its community, resulting in mutual misunderstanding and hostility. For these reasons, and because the school is deemed a middle-class institution,[11] our expectation was that lower-class residents would evaluate the schools more negatively than middleclass residents. Yet, as Tables VIII - XII show, the reverse turned out to be true in the community which we studied.

The data presented in Table VIII were constructed from respondents' selections of community problems from a list of five.[12] In general, schools were not considered much of a problem, ranking fourth in the list of five. It can be seen from Table VIII that designation of the public schools as the first or second biggest problem in the area increases with position in the class hierarchy. Although about one-fourth of the middle-class respondents selected it as the number one or two problem of the community, only about one-half that proportion of the working and lower-class respondents did so. The same relationship exists when only respondents in households with school children are compared. It should be noted, however, that the proportion of such residents in each social class designating the schools as one of the major problems of the community is higher than for residents without children in the public schools.

Table IX presents data on residents' evaluation of the job being done by the public schools. As in the previous table, middle-class residents are more negative. For all respondents, about one-fifth of the middle-class respondents compared to nearly two-fifths of the lower and working-class respondents feel that the schools are doing an "excellent" or a "good" job. When respondents in households with children actually in school are compared, the negative relationship between class position and positive evaluation of the schools increases. About half of the lower and working-class respondents give a positive evaluation, while only three out of every ten middle-class respondents do so.

In Table X it is possible to discern a possible reason for class differences in evaluation of the schools. When evaluating the schools, middle-class respondents are more likely to think of conditions in the schools, such as overcrowding, rundown buildings and the like. Lower-class residents, on the other hand, are more likely to think of the teachers when evaluating the public schools. Members of the working-class stand between these two groups, stressing conditions in the school more than teachers, but not to the same degree as do members of the middle-class. These general tendencies also exist when comparisons are made just for respondents in households with children in school.

Tables XI and XII are drawn from a battery of agree-disagree items. The results of Table XI conform to those of previous tables. Middle-class respondents evaluate teachers more negatively than do lower and working-class respondents. Whereas almost three out of ten middle-class respondents disagree that teachers are really interested in their pupils, less than two out of ten lower-class respondents feel this way. When respondents from households with children actually in school are compared, this relationship becomes even stronger. In addition, it should be noted that negative appraisal of teachers' interest is slightly higher for all class groups.

Table XII is the only table that fails to conform to the general pattern. The item involved in this table is also the only one which contains and explicit reference to economic position. Lower-class respondents are more likely than those from the middle-class or the working-class to feel that the schools do not pay enough attention to kids from poor families. Nearly one out of every three lower-class respondents gives this response, compared to less than one in five of the middle and lower-class respondents. The relationship holds when respondents in households with children in school are examined separately. Thus, when the schools's attitude towards pupils from the lowest economic stratum is explicitly asked about, respondents in that class are more negative than those in the classes above them.

In general, then, middle-class respondents have the more negative opinion of the public schools. They are more likely to consider the public schools one of the major problems of the community, are less likely to feel that it is doing a good job, and are more likely to disagree with the assertion that the teachers are really interested in their students. Only when the reaction of the schools towards pupils from the lowest economic stratum is mentioned do middle-class respondents exhibit a less negative attitude than persons at the bottom of the class ladder.[13]

It is not yet clear what these findings mean. Several interpretations are possible. It may be that lower-class respondents, faced with the certainty of sending their children to public school, develop a more positive attitude towards the schools as a means of feeling better a bout what has to be done. Middle-class persons, with the alternative of sending their children to private schools, can afford to be more negative about the state of the schools. A second interpretation is that the middle-class person imagines the school unable to cope with a discipline problem presented by lower-class pupils and concludes that public education cannot be very good. Finally, it is possible that members of the middle-class have higher expectations of what the schools are supposed to accomplish, thus making their evaluation of the performance of the school more negative than that of members of the working and lower classes.

Spurious Relationships

The persons who occupy the various strata of the class hierarchy differ in many ways other than those used to define class position. Puerto Ricans, Negroes, the foreign-born, and short-term residents in the community are more likely to be in the lowest stratum. Correlatively, Jews and other whites, those who were born in the United States, and long-term residents of the community are more likely to be in the upper strata. It may be that <u>these</u> characteristics, rather than class position, produced the results just presented.

In addition, the results may be solely a product of the amount of schooling a respondent has had, rather than his general class standing. The findings relating to class reported above were, therefore, examined for various racial, religious, and immigrant groupings. They were also examined for persons with varying amounts of education, and years of residence in the community. Although the class trends were more pronounced in some groups than in others, the findings, with one exception, appear to be a consequence of class position. The

single exception is the relationship between class position and appraisal of teachers' interest in their pupils (Table XI). This was found to be a consequence of amount of education alone. The more years of school a respondent had completed, the more likely he was to disagree with the assertion that teachers were really interested in their pupils. Thus, in the exploration of the impact of involvement in educational matters upon class attitudes towards education, which follows, this item will not be examined.

The Impact of Educational Involvement

We turn now to the question of whether involvement in educational activities influences attitudes toward education generally and toward the school particularly. As noted earlier, our measure of involvement yields three general categories of people, those with children in school who: (1) have no other contact with the school, or (2) visit the school, or (3) participate in Parent-Teacher Association activities.

In the pages which follow, we shall be discussing the changes in attitudes towards education and evaluation of the public schools which are brought about as a result of participation in PTA activities or contact with school personnel. It is quite possible that rather than attitude changes being the result of participation, that attitudes determine participation. What is even more probable is that attitudes and participation are mutually intertwined, that each is both a cause and effect of the other. We have chosen, for the present, to ignore the possibility of mutual effects, and the possibility that the relationships run directly opposite to the way we will discuss them, because our preliminary examination of the data indicates that attitudes towards education and the schools are greatly affected by the presence of children in the household, and whether or not those children are in school. A comparison of the top and bottom halves of Tables II, III, and VI - XII indicates that the attitudes of respondents with children in school are quite different from those without children in school. As will be subsequently shown, the direction of these differences are the same as differences between respondents participating in the educational system and those not. This, however, is minimal evidence for taking the position that we have. It is expected that subsequent analyses of our data will permit a precise detailing of cause and effect relationships, thus highlighting the mutual effects, if any, between attitudes towards education and participation in educational matters.

The Importance of Education

Generally speaking, our data show that the value of education is heightened by parents who visit the school or who participate in Parent-Teacher Associations. Furthermore, the impact of involvement in the school upon definitions of the importance of education tends to be greater in the lower and working-classes than in the middle-class. These findings may be demonstrated by examining Tables XIII-XVIII.

One question we asked was: "How much education do you think that a young man needs to get along well in the world?" As we noted earlier, the responses to this question show a direct relationship to class; the higher the social

class, the more likely that the respondent would indicate that more than high school education was necessary.

The critical point to be made about Table XIII, however, is that participation in educational activities through visits or membership in Parent-Teacher Association affects estimates of the importance of education in the various social classes differently. The greatest impact is shown to be upon the working-class group; 63 percent of working-class persons who have no contact with the school feel that more than a high school education is essential; 69 percent of those who report having visited the school in the past year give this response; and 78 percent who report participating in parent associations are so minded. With respect to this one measure, however, the lower-class shows the least change in definitions of the importance of education as a result of participation. But, as we shall presently see, on all other measures of the importance of education which we used, the impact of education turns out to be greatest for the lower-class.

Elsewhere in our interview we asked respondents to define what "getting ahead" meant to them. Although persons in the lower-class were least likely to mention getting an education (Table XIV), they were the most likely to be influenced in this respect by participation: 16 percent of lower-class persons who had no contact with the school mentioned getting an education, but 25 percent of those connected to PTA's gave this answer. The impact of participation upon working-class persons is almost as great as in the lower-class. In the middle-class, however, participation appears to have no appreciable influence.

The extent to which people name education as an element in "what comes to mind when you think of a good life for your children" also provides us with a way of measuring the impact of educational involvement upon attitudes toward education (Table XV). The attitudes of people in the lower-class are especially influenced by educational participation; among those who are involved in formal educational activities, three out of four suggest that the good life for both boys and girls is equated with getting an education; only half of those who have no contact with the school give this response, however. The middle-class also shows an increasing tendency to equate education with the good life as the degree of participation increases (although there is an exception in one cell, it should be noted that the number of cases is very small). In the working-class group, however, there is a slight and inexplicable tendency for participation to lessen the emphasis on education.

The School as an Institution

Evaluations and appraisals of the school as an institution were also influenced by involvement in school activities. Generally, the greater the exposure to the school and its personnel, the less favorable the views tended to become.

Table XVI shows, for example, that with greater exposure to the school there is a definite tendency for more respondents to define the public schools as the first or second biggest problem in the community. It should also be noted that the influence of exposure upon appraisals is greatest in the middle-class, where the percentage difference between low and high participators is 28

percent; the difference in the working-class is 12 percent, and in the lower-class, only 10 percent. At the same moment, however, the proportion of people who appraise the school as a major problem in the community never exceed 41 percent (middle-class high participators). Even with greater exposure to the schools, most people continue to feel that other problems in the community are of greater importance.

With respect to whether people think that the schools are doing a good or poor job, exposure has little impact or negative impact (Table XVII). In the working-class there is a tendency for more negative appraisals to result from exposure; in the lower and middle-classes, appraisals remain relatively constant whatever the degree of participation.

These results would tend to suggest that school administrators must be prepared to deal with more negative attitudes toward the school if greater efforts are made to involve people in school activities. Such involvement, as we noted earlier, is functional for attitudes toward the importance of education generally; but as attitudes toward education improve the school as an institution is more likely to come under attack. Skillfully managed, however, these negative attitudes can become a source of pressure for better educational facilities and programs.

In Table XVIII, we find some reason to qualify our earlier remarks about the positive impact of participation in educational activities toward the school. If we look at changes in the aspects of the school as an institution to which people refer when making appraisals, it turns out that the lower and working-classes shift in the direction of exhibiting greater concern about facilities. The tendency to evaluate the school from the standpoint of the adequacy of its facilities - as distinct from such other characteristics as the quality of its teachers - is, we noted earlier, more typical of middle-class people than of those in either the lower or working-classes. Participation in educational activities, however, appears to produce significant changes. As a result of formal participation, the working-class respondent refers to conditions as much as his middle-class counterpart, and the lower-class participant shows a smaller but nevertheless dramatic shift in the same direction. This change could be produced by a number of factors. Sheer exposure to schools through visits and the like may make the respondent more aware than previously of the state of school facilities. Another possibility is that Parent-Teacher Associations are dominated by a concern with physical plant because they are controlled by middle-class persons who express this concern more than others in the class structure. Through association with middle-class PTA members, the lower and working-class person may thus be made more aware of physical plant, and may identify with middle-class definitions of it.

This particular effect of participation would not otherwise cause concern except that in the working-class it is accompanied by a sharp decline in emphasis upon matters such as dicipline and learning. The effect, in short, may be one of heightening concern about education in the sense of focusing attention upon physical plant at the expense of interest in matters of program and curriculum. In the lower and working-classes, this would not appear to be a desirable consequence, all of which suggests that the content of educational involvement is as important as the fact of involvement itself.[14]

In conclusion, two general findings - however tentative - emerge from this research. The first is that evaluations of the importance of education in the lower and working-classes appear to be influenced by occupational aspirations. The point is not, as has been so often suggested, that low income people fail to perceive the importance of education as a channel of mobility, but rather that their level of occupational aspiration influences their evaluation of education much more than is characteristic of the middle-class person. From a programmatic standpoint, this suggests that public information programs designed to acquaint low income people with the rapid changes taking place in our occupational structure, especially the restricted number of unskilled and semi-skilled positions, may have the effect of heightening occupational aspirations and thus the importance of education.

Second, our data suggest that participation in educational activities does influence evaluations of the importance of education, and attitudes toward the school as an institution. The tendency of participation to heighten the emphasis on education is specially pronounced in the lower class. This suggests that efforts to involve lower-class people in educational matters are quite likely to be rewarded by increased interest in the academic achievement of their children. Participation also tends to result in more critical attitudes toward the school as an institution. These generally more negative attitudes, we noted, can be employed by school administrators as a basis for bringing about needed improvements in school facilities and programs.

TABLE I

Class Differentials in Emphasis on the Need
For College Education
(201 Males Aged 14 to 20) *

Socioeconomic Position of Family	Percent Recommending a College Education	Number of Respondents
Wealthy and prosperous	74	39
Middle Class	63	100
Lower Class	42	62

* H. H. Hyman, "The Value Systems of Different Classes: A Social-Psychological Contribution to the Analysis of Stratification", in Reinhard Bendix and S. M. Lipset, eds., Class, Status and Power (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1953), p. 432.

TABLE II

Percentage of Respondents in each Class who Think that a Young Man Needs More than a High-School Education in order "to get along well in the world."*

	All Respondents		
	Lower	Working	Middle
% Saying More Than H.S. Education	41%	59%	76%
No. of Cases	(434)	(354)	(200)

	Respondents With Children in School Only		
	Lower	Working	Middle
More Than H.S.	43%	68%	81%
No. of Cases	(187)	(142)	(55)

*The specific question asked was: "About how much schooling do you think most young men need these days to get along well in the world?"

TABLE III

Percentage of Respondents in each Class who say that "getting ahead" means Obtaining or Providing a Good Education.*

Total Number of Respondents

	Lower	Working	Middle
% Saying Good Education	17	19	24
No. of Cases	(434)	(354)	(200)

Respondents with Children in School Only

	Lower	Working	Middle
% Saying Good Education	19	26	25
No. of Cases	(187)	(142)	(55)

*The specific question asked was: "When we talk about getting ahead, or rising in the world, what sorts of things come to mind? (What does getting ahead mean to you?) anything else?

TABLE IV

Percentage of Respondents in Each Class who Think that a Young Man Needs More than a High-School Education in Order "to get along well in the world" by Level of Occupational Aspiration*

	Lower		Working		Middle	
	Profess. & Semi-Prof.	Other	Profess. & Semi-Prof.	Other	Profess. & Semi-Prof.	Other
% Saying More Than a H. S. Education	50%	29%	62%	54%	75%	77%
No. of cases	(248)	(186)	(243)	(111)	(131)	(69)

*The specific question asked to determine level of occupational aspiration was: "Suppose some outstanding young man asked your advice on what would be one of the best occupations to aim toward. What one occupation do you think you would advise him toward?"

TABLE V

Percentage of Respondents in each Class who say that "getting ahead" means Obtaining or Providing a Good Education by Level of Occupational Aspiration

	Lower		Working		Middle	
	Profess. & Semi-Prof.	Other	Profess. & Semi-Prof.	Other	Profess. & Semi-Prof.	Other
% Saying Good Education	22%	11%	24%	9%	25%	22%
No. of Cases	(248)	(186)	(243)	(111)	(131)	(69)

TABLE VI

Percentage of Respondents in each Class who say that Education comes to mind when they think of a Good Life for the Boys in the Household.*

All Respondents

	Lower	Working	Middle
% Mentioning Education	56	62	57
No. of Cases	(208)	(155)	(60)

Respondents with Children in School Only

	Lower	Working	Middle
% Mentioning Education	59	67	59
No. of Cases	(157)	(123)	(41)

*The specific question asked was: "Most people would like to see children have a good life. Could you tell me what comes to mind when you think of a good life for (name boys in house)? Anything else?

TABLE VII

Percentage of Respondents in each Class who say that Education comes to mind when they think of a Good Life for the Girls in the Household.*

All Respondents

	Lower	Working	Middle
% Mentioning Education	56	61	62
No. of Cases	(196)	(134)	(53)

Respondents with Children in School Only

	Lower	Working	Middle
% Mentioning Education	56	65	59
No. of Cases	(148)	(105)	(37)

*The specific question asked was: "(Most people would like to see children have a good life.) Could you tell me what comes to mind when you think of a good life for (name girls in house)? Anything else?

TABLE VIII

Percentage of Respondents in each Class who Consider the Public Schools to be the First or Second Biggest Problem in the Community.*

All Respondents

	Lower	Working	Middle
%mentioning school first or second	13	15	25
No. of Cases	(434)	(354)	(200)

Respondents with Children in School Only

	Lower	Working	Middle
% mentioning school first or second	19	22	31
No. of Cases	(187)	(142)	(55)

*The specific question asked was: "Here is a list of problems that some communities have. What in your opinion is the biggest problem around here? What is the next biggest problem around here?

TABLE IX

Percentage of Respondents in each Class who Think that the Public Schools are Doing an "Excellent" or a "Good" Job.*

All Respondents

	Lower	Working	Middle
% Saying Excellent or Good	37	37	21
No. of Cases	(434)	(354)	(200)

Respondents with Children in School Only

	Lower	Working	Middle
% Saying Excellent or Good	50	45	31
No. of Cases	(187)	(142)	(55)

*The specific question asked was: "In general, do you feel the public schools around here are doing an excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor job?

TABLE X

Criteria for the Evaluation of the Public Schools by Class*

All Respondents

	Lower	Working	Middle
% Stressing:			
Conditions	27	32	40
Teachers	27	21	19
Discipline	16	23	20
Learning	21	19	16
Other	9	5	5
No. of Responses	(409)	(354)	(197)

Respondents with Children in School Only

	Lower	Working	Middle
% Stressing:			
Conditions	26	32	41
Teachers	28	23	13
Discipline	14	20	23
Learning	22	21	17
Other	10	4	6
No. of Responses	(256)	(183)	(64)

*The specific question asked following the respondents rating of the job being done by the public schools was: "Why do you say that?"

TABLE XI

Percentage of respondents in each Class Disagreeing that "The Teachers Here are Really Interested in the Kids."

All Respondents

	Lower	Working	Middle
% Disagreeing	19	25	28
No. of Cases	(434)	(354)	(200)

Respondents with Children in School Only

	Lower	Working	Middle
% Disagreeing	22	27	35
No. of Cases	(187)	(142)	(55)

TABLE XII

Percentage of Respondents in each Class Agreeing that "The Schools Don't Pay Much Attention to Kids Who Come From Poor Families."

All Respondents

	Lower	Working	Middle
%Agreeing	31	19	18
No. of Cases	(434)	(354)	(200)

Respondents with Children in School Only

	Lower	Working	Middle
% Agreeing	34	16	18
No. of Cases	(187)	(142)	(55)

TABLE XIII

Percentage of Respondents in each Class Who Think That a Young Man Needs More Than a High-School Education in order "to get along well in the world" by Extent of Involvement in Education

	Lower Class			Working Class			Middle Class		
	NC*	VO	FP	NC	VO	FP	NC	VO	FP
% Saying More than H.S.	43	43	46	63	69	78	76	78	87
No. of Cases	(63)	(86)	(28)	(33)	(53)	(45)	(8)	(22)	(22)

*These abbreviations stand for "No contact," "Visits Only," and "Formal Participation." They are used throughout the remaining tables.

TABLE XIV

Percentage of Respondents in each Class who say that "getting ahead" means Obtaining or Providing a Good Education by Extent of Involvement in Education

	Lower Class			Working Class			Middle Class		
	NC	VO	FP	NC	VO	FP	NC	VO	FP
% Saying Education	16	22	25	21	26	29	25	27	23
No. of Cases	(63)	(86)	(28)	(33)	(53)	(45)	(8)	(22)	(22)

TABIE XV

Percentage of Respondents in each Class who say that Education comes to mind when they think of a Good Life for Boys and for Girls in the Household by Extent of Involvement in Education

	Lower Class			Working Class			Middle Class		
	NC	VO	FP	NC	VO	FP	NC	VO	FP
Boys									
% Education	54	61	76	69	64	65	50	53	65
No. of Cases	(54)	(74)	(21)	(29)	(47)	(37)	(4)	(17)	(17)
Girls									
% Education	47	56	78	70	64	61	83	40	71
No. of Cases	(47)	(70)	(23)	(23)	(39)	(36)	(6)	(15)	(14)

TABIE XVI

Percentage of Respondents in each Class who consider the Public Schools to be the First or Second Biggest Problem in the Community by Extent of Involvement in Education

	Lower Class			Working Class			Middle Class		
	NC	VO	FP	NC	VO	FP	NC	VO	FP
% Schools	19	18	29	15	23	27	13	32	41
No. of Cases	(63)	(86)	(28)	(33)	(53)	(45)	(8)	(22)	(22)

TABLE XVII

Percentage of Respondents in each Class who think that the Public Schools are doing an "Excellent" or "Good" job by Extent of Involvement in Education

	Lower Class			Working Class			Middle Class		
	NC	VO	FP	NC	VO	FP	NC	VO	FP
% "Excellent" or "Good"	54	48	54	57	41	42	38	23	41
No. of Cases	(63)	(86)	(28)	(33)	(53)	(45)	(8)	(22)	(22)

TABLE XVIII

Criteria for Evaluation of Public Schools by Class and Extent of Involvement in Education

	Lower Class			Working Class			Middle Class		
	NC	VO	FP	NC	VO	FP	NC	VO	FP
% Stressing:									
Conditions	18	31	27	19	32	42	42	44	40
Teachers	25	31	24	22	19	27	8	19	10
Discipline	14	12	16	27	22	13	25	22	20
Learning	24	22	24	27	26	12	17	11	15
Other	19	4	8	5	1	7	8	4	5
No. of Responses	(93)	(117)	(37)	(37)	(74)	(60)	(12)	(27)	(20)

FOOTNOTES

1. The data upon which this paper is based were drawn from surveys conducted by the New York School of Social Work, Columbia University, in conjunction with Mobilization for Youth, Inc.

2. See Howard Becker, "The Career of the Chicago Public School Teacher," American Sociological Review, Vol. 17, No. 7 (July, 1952), pp. 470-476.

3. Martin P. Deutsch, Minority Group and Class Status as Related to Social and Personality Factors in Scholastic Achievement (New York: The Society for Applied Anthropology, Monograph Number 2, 1960), p. 23.

4. S. M. Lipset and Reinhard Bendix, Social Mobility in Industrial Society (Berkeley and Los Angeles, Calif.: University of California Press, 1959), p. 99.

5. Herbert H. Hyman, "The Value Systems of Different Classes: A Social-Psychological Contribution to the Analysis of Stratification," in Reinhard Bendix and S. M. Lipset, eds., Class Status and Power (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1953).

6. For one account of these value orientations, see Florence Kluckhohn (Variations in the Basic Values of Family Systems," in Norman W. Bell and Ezra F. Vogel, A Modern Introduction to the Family (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1960), pp. 304-316. See also the recent book by Frank Riessman which goes directly to the relationship between value differences and educational achievement, The Culturally Deprived Child (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962).

7. That is, a stratified random sample in which the sampling proportion is is the same within all strata. William G. Cochran, Sampling Techniques, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1953), p. 67.

8. The languages were: English, Spanish, Yiddish, German, Polish, Italian, Russian, Ukranian, French, Hungarian, Japanese, Chinese, and Greek.

9. See, among others: Joseph A. Kahl, The American Class Structure (New York: Rinehart & Co., Inc., 1957); Bernard Barber, Social Stratification (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1957): and Harold W. Pfautz, "The Current Literature on Social Stratification," The American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 58, (January, 1953), pp. 391-418.

10. At least one study in a foreign country (Sweden) indicates that this differential evaluation of education is not restricted to the American class structure. (See: Hadley Cantril, Public Opinion, 1935-1946. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1951, pp. 180-181).

11. Albert K. Cohen, "School and Settlement House," in Herman D. Stein and Richard A. Cloward, Social Perspectives on Behavior (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1958), pp. 341-344. Also, Martin Mayer, The Schools (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961), pp. 114-135.

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12. The five problems were: the transportation, the public schools, the city police protection, the way teenagers behave around here, and the way certain racial groups behave.

13. It was worthwhile pointing outthat a negative attitude towards the schools is not automatically a cause for despair. It is not at all uncommon for positive consequences to flow from negative attitudes. It seems certain, in fact, that if improvements in school plant and curricula are to be effectuated, there must be discontent and negativism to provide the motivation for such change.

14. It will be recalled that in Table XII lower classpeople were most likely to feel that the schools "do not pay much attention to kids from poor families." The impact that involvement in education has upon this attitude is difficult to interpret. It is clear from the table presented below that involvement in education tends to produce a more negative attitute among middle class persons, a less negative one among lower class persons. As yet, we do not know what to make of this result. A tentative interpretation is that middle and lower class persons are tending toward a more realistic assessment. Upon becoming involved, middle class persons discover that the children of poorer families are not as well treated as had been initially supposed, while lower class persons who become involved discover that children of poorer families are treated better than had been supposed. Essentially, however, the results of this table remain puzzling to us, and call for further analysis.

Percent of Respondents in each Class Agreeing that "The Schools Don't Pay Much Attention to Kids Who Come from Poor Families" by Extent of Involvement in Education

	Lower Class			Working Class			Middle Class		
	NC	VO	FP	NC	VO	FP	NC	VO	FP
% Agreeing	41	31	32	18	13	18	--	14	27
No. of Cases	(63)	(86)	(28)	(33)	(53)	(45)	(8)	(22)	(22)